

Rest That Brings Contentment

I. Introduction

Thank you so much for joining me.

Let's open in prayer and get started: **PRAY**

Have you ever caught yourself thinking, "*If only...*,"

If only this season were over.

If only things were easier.

If only I had a little more—time, clarity, energy.

Those phrases don't just reveal frustration—they expose where our hearts have quietly drifted. Somewhere in those words, our gaze has drifted from God to a hoped-for circumstance, a different version of life, or a future we believe will finally let us rest.

Scripture insists—again and again—that **God Himself is enough** (2 Corinthians 12:9) And yet, so many of us carry a tender ache to *go back*—back to the season before the struggle, before the disappointment, before the weight we never expected to carry. We long for easier days, quieter moments, happier versions of ourselves.

But what if that longing was never meant to pull us backward?

What if it was meant to reveal what we're trusting—and draw us forward into deeper dependence on God?

What if we're meant to be *right here*—in the middle of what we never would have chosen—so He can show us that His sufficiency doesn't wait for easier days or better circumstances, and so He can deepen our trust that He *will* use *this* for His glory and for our good (Romans 8:28)?

It's about discovering how to **rest right where we are**.

NOTE: A Safe Space

Before we go further, let me say this clearly: this is a safe space. There is no judgment here. We are learning together. What you share stays here, and you are free to be honest and vulnerable.

This time is designed to be interactive—a shared exploration of *rest that brings contentment*.

II. Why am I here leading this chat this morning?

If I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you, I am Sarah Burdon and I was saved 8 Nov 2011 and have seen the gracious work of God all over my life. From the ultimate rescue from the judgement of my sin, to the recovery from a past abusive relationship, infertility, marital challenges, parenting children with special needs, the loss of my mother. I could go on for days praising God for all He has graciously brought me through but those are testimonies for another day. We are an AF family. My husband, CJ and I have 5 biological IVF children (13, 11, 8, 5, & 3) and at least 3 waiting in Heaven.

When I was asked to speak on rest and contentment, I thought for sure they had the wrong person. I remember telling my mother-in-law about it, and she laughed and said, "*Do they know who they asked?*" She knows I don't sit still going from sunup to sundown.

But as I prayed, I realized they had asked the *right* person—because this was exactly where God was calling me back. I once lived with a deep, settled rest—not just in the hardships but in the everyday. Somewhere along the way, I drifted and my daily living in-the-moment peace was missing. And the question wouldn't leave me:

What is rest—and how do I return to it?

III. What is rest?

Q: How would you define rest?

Webster defines rest with words like: peace, calm, respite, serenity, peacefulness, stillness, trust, confidence, firmly fixed.

And its opposites are quite telling: labor, pressure, toil, stress, tension, strain, anxious, disturbed.

Well, what does the bible say about rest?

In the Old Covenant, Sabbath rest was commanded clearly and repeatedly in (Ex 20:9-10, Exodus 31:14-15, Exodus 35:2, and Numbers 15:32-36). The command was not symbolic or optional—violating the Sabbath was "*profaning the Lord*" and the penalty was death.

In Exodus, Deut and Ezekial we see (Ex 16:22-30, Ex 20:8-11, Duet 5:12-15, Ez 20:12) that Sabbath rest was a declaration of trust and relationship. It testified that God- not productivity- was Israels **Provider and He is Trustworthy, and Faithful.**

For Israel, this command was radical. These were people who had lived their whole lives generation after generation under Pharaoh, where worth was measured by output. While Pharaoh demanded production, God commanded rest all while the surrounding nations toiled without ceasing (Ex 20:10, Deu 5:14). To stop striving and rest in God's provision was and continues to be an act of faith, obedience, and worship. (Psalm 46:10, Heb 4:10)

Scripture makes it unmistakably clear: **rest isn't found in a place or a pace—rest is found in God Himself.** (Ps 62:1-2, Ps 23:2-3, Heb 4:9-10) And we see that same promise as far back as Exodus 33:14, when the Lord tells Moses, *“My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

The Sabbath Day was intended as a signpost. According to Colossians 2:16–17, the Old Covenant Sabbath served as a **shadow** that pointed toward Christ. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus refers to himself as the “Lord of the Sabbath” and explains that he came to fulfil the Law.

Under the New Covenant, rest is no longer about a particular day of observance—it is about **letting go of self-righteous efforts and** trusting fully in the completed work of Christ.

Jesus offers the same divine rest God promised to Moses— in Matthew 11:28 when He says, *“Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

Please turn w/me to Hebrews 4.

While we could spend days on Hebrews 4, Scripture is clear-- Jesus is not only the **source** of our rest—**he IS our rest.** He is our Sabbath today and for eternity. Believers are no longer bound by the Mosaic Law but this doesn't mean Sabbath rest has disappeared; rather, it's been fulfilled through Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The work is finished, and the invitation remains, as we see in verse 7:

Believe and Rest in Him. (Heb 4:3)

IV. Indicators We've Drifted from Rest What does NOT resting look like?

Anytime we think, live or function as though we need something other than Christ to be satisfied, we've drifted (Heb 2:1, 3:12-14). This drift never remains invisible—it surfaces as restlessness, discontent, inner unrest

Q: What other indicators of drift from rest in Christ can you think of?

These are all often symptoms of (Psalm 42:1-5):

- misplaced trust (Jeremiah2:13)
- striving for worth (1Tim 6:10, Phil 3:7-9) and/or
- disordered priorities (Col 3:1-3, Matt 6:33)

Many of us are secure in our salvation, but restless in daily life. And This is exactly where I found myself when asked to lead this chat, not tired and satisfied but emotionally spent and overwhelmed, exhausted, and drowning in the everyday life.

The realization I came to as I studied His word for this chat, was God allowed this exhaustion, not to punish me (Isaiah 42:3)—but to expose where I'd placed my dependance/where I had drifted. (Isaiah 40:29-31, Deut 8:2-3, James 1:2-4, 2 Timothy 1:8-12).

How did I get here?

Worn out. Empty. Most days not just calling out—but if I'm being honest—yelling at God, "Where are you?"

There was a time when I soared on wings like eagles, ran and did not grow weary, I walked and did not grow faint in valleys that should have broken me. (Isaiah 40:31) But here I was drowning in the everyday. But drift doesn't happen all at once. Like a large ship slowly changing course, it happens one small degree at a time. As I looked back over the last year, the Lord gently showed me how subtle the shift had been.

Somewhere along the way, I slowly began relying on my own strength. I was striving for a sense of worth that can only be found in Him—received, not earned. My priorities slipped out of order, and if I'm honest, they still do more often than I'd like to admit. I default to accomplishing, pushing, proving—living as if everything depends on me.

Looking back, I can see a subtle drift where I wasn't trusting the Lord's wisdom or His sovereignty over my season. And yet—this is the grace—He didn't expose that drift to shame me. He did it because He loves me, desires my heart, and is continually calling me to grow more Christlike and to glorify Him in the everyday moments of my life.

Q. Where do you find yourself spent/exhausted/overwhelmed/weary, and what might God be inviting you to notice about where you've drifted or placed your dependance?

V. Is It Okay Not to Be at Rest?

In **Exodus 31:13–17**, God declares the Sabbath holy. A permanent sign between Himself and His people that He is The Lord who consecrates/sanctifies/blesses/makes you holy/sets you apart.

When God's people refuse rest, we began to look no different from the world. When we consistently refuse to rest in our day-to-day lives, we communicate to a watching world that He is not sufficient, not trustworthy, and not enough. And over time, restless living can dull our witness and dishonor the very name we claim to love. (Psalm 127:2, Exo 20:8-11, Proverbs 30:9,

Ecc 2:23)

Under the new covenant, rest signifies reliance on the completed work of Christ rather than adhering to a strict 24-hour Sabbath observance. (Heb 4:9-10, Col 2:16-17, Romans 14:5-6, Matt 11:28-30).

Q: What are some examples of what True rest looks like in everyday life?

- trusting God's provision over our effort
- releasing control
- being content where He has placed us
- rooting our identity in who He says we are
- seeing people as the purpose, not interruptions

A rested life becomes a visible testimony to a restless world standing in stark contrast to a culture driven that is striving and wearing exhaustion as a badge of honor. (Psalm 127:2, Psalm 46:10)

Q. If we're honest, what might our current living be reflecting to the outside world about Christ?

VI. Root of Unrest/Discontent

Biblical contentment isn't a personality trait or the reward for an easy season.

It's a posture the Holy Spirit forms in us over time—learning to trust God regardless of circumstances. (Phil 4:11-13, 1 Tim 6:6-8, 2 Cor 12:9-10)

The enemy uses subtle deception and one of his favorite lies is that our value is tied to accomplishment (2 Cor 11:14, 2 Cor 4:4).

While I **knew** I could never earn God's favor my life was not demonstrating that.

And when the enemy deceives me into believing, even by a degree that my works can earn God's favor, I fall into relentless striving. I chase perfection I can never reach. Obedience feels heavy. Service becomes exhausting. And over time, my soul grows weary, frustrated, and discouraged (Gal 3:3, Eph 2:8-9, Matt 11:28-30, 2 Cor 12:9).

But when I remember that my works are a **response to grace—not a means of earning it—everything changes**. I rest in Christ's finished work. Serve from gratitude not fear. Obey from love instead of obligation, and my desire shifts from earning approval to glorifying God. (Eph 2:8-10, Titus 3:5, 1 John 4:19, John 14:15, Gal 5:1, Gal 2:20, Rom 11:6, Gal 5:4)

God doesn't use unrest to shame us—He uses it to gently call us back. Abiding in Him brings stability, truth renews our minds, and freedom grows as we surrender. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, and our works simply flow from that gift. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

As we trust Christ's finished work, the Spirit frees us from striving and leads us into rest that brings lasting contentment. (John 19:30, Heb 4:10)

Q. What is God asking you to surrender? **AND** What are some distractions, escapes, or comforts that might be distracting or keeping you from resting in Him?

VII. Closing:

In the letters to the Ephesians, Romans and Hebrews we are warned us against hardening our hearts.

A hardened heart does not form overnight. It develops quietly—through small, repeated moments of resistance. Each time we delay obedience, ignore conviction, or postpone rest, our hearts grow less responsive to God's gentle call to rest in Him/That He is enough.

(Heb 3:7-13, 4:7-11, Psalm 95:7-11, Eph 4:18, Rom 2:5)

Hear the voice of God **today**. Don't harden your heart.

Jesus invites us now

Not when life settles down.

Not when the season changes.

Not when everything feels manageable.

Today.

"Come to Me... and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt 11:28-29)

Q: Where is God inviting you to return to Him? **AND** What would it look like to rest—not someday—but **today, right** where you are?

If you walk away with nothing else, hold tightly to this truth:

The rest that brings true contentment is found in Christ alone.

And He is sufficient—for you, for this moment, for this season. (Phil 4:11-13, Matt 11:28-30 2 Cor 12:9)

PRAY

Worshippers of false gods exhaust themselves, but you command your people, us, to rest. **AND** then graciously provide the only rest that will satisfy. Thank you. (Philippians 4:19 and 2

Corinthians 12:9)